

DOCKET NO.: BELL-0136/01180
Application No.: 09/963,918
Office Action Dated: May 20, 2004

PATENT

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated May 20, 2004, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-11 are pending. Claims 1-11 have been rejected. Claims 1, 9, and 11 are independent claims from which claims 2-8, and 10 respectively depend.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview held on June 23, 2004. Attached herewith is an Interview Summary.

Claims 1-11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Williams et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,097,801). It is respectfully submitted that these claims are patentable for at least the reasons set forth below.

FIG. 1 illustrates a telecommunications environment in which Number Pooling has been implemented as is known in the art. A Number Portability Administration Center (NPAC) 102 is communicatively coupled to Pooling Administration (PA) 104 and to Competitive Local Exchange Carrier 106, and to Local Number Portability (LNP) Gateway 108 of a service provider 150. PA 104 manages the donation and assignment of numbering blocks within the pool. NPAC 102 downloads location routing number (LRN) data to a database that supports the routing of telephone calls in North America. Telecommunication carriers connect to NPAC 102 to receive telephone number and LRN information.

When a block of numbers is donated to PA 104 by a donating service provider, a list of contaminated telephone numbers included within the donated block of numbers is provided to all service providers, as illustrated and described with reference to FIG. 2. Contaminated telephone numbers are those numbers in the donated block that are not available for assignment by the receiving service provider. For example, a telephone number that is already in use with a first (donating) service provider when the donated block of numbers including that number is assigned to a second (receiving) service provider, is a contaminated telephone number. NPAC 102 broadcasts the list of contaminated numbers to all service providers when the block of numbers is donated.

When the donated block of numbers is released to the receiving service provider, as illustrated and described with reference to FIG. 3, the NPAC broadcasts a message including

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the LRN of the donating service provider's switch but does not include the LRN of the receiving service provider's switch. As a result, components of at least the receiving service provider may not know the LRN of the switch to which the uncontaminated numbers will be attached and will not know what numbers in the block are contaminated.

According to exemplary embodiments, methods and systems are provided for notifying components of a service provider of the correct LRN to be associated with a block of numbers received by a service provider and in which a list of contaminated numbers contained within the received block of numbers are identified. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 4, an Order Management System (OMS) 108a is coupled to receiving service provider components such as Block Administration Center (BAC) 110, Customer Billing System (CBS) 112 and Facility Maintenance System (FMS) 114 and sends a message to the service components including an identification of contaminated numbers within a block of received numbers, and the LRN of the service provider that receives the block of numbers.

As illustrated and described with reference to FIG. 5, following the receipt of the NPAC message including the LRN of the donating service provider's switch but not including the LRN of the receiving service provider's switch, the OMS 108a retrieves a list of contaminated numbers contained within the received block from a database at the NPAC 102. The LRN to which the block of numbers received will be associated is retrieved from the same or from a second database. The contaminated number data and the receiving LRN to which the uncontaminated numbers will be associated may be sent to service provider components such as components BAC 110, CBS 112 and FMS 114.

Claim 1, for example, recites:

A method of notifying a component of a service provider associated with a telephone system, wherein the service provider receives a block of telephone numbers including contaminated and uncontaminated numbers within a received block of telephone numbers, the contaminated numbers being unavailable for use by the receiving service provider, the method comprising:

- requesting a block of telephone numbers from a number pool;
- receiving the requested block of telephone numbers from the number pool;
- retrieving from a database a list comprising a plurality of contaminated numbers included in the received block of received numbers; and*
- retrieving from a database, a location routing number of a switch associated with the plurality of uncontaminated numbers included in the received block of numbers.*

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(emphasis added).

Williams does not disclose or suggest at least the italicized features of Applicant's claim 1. The Williams reference is directed to a method of providing number portability for correctly routing calls from a calling party to a specific number of a ported called party. Local Number Portability refers to "the ability of users of telecommunications services, to retain, at the same location, existing telephone numbers without impairment of quality, reliability, or convenience when switching from one telecommunications carrier to another." (Definition from website of NeuStar, Inc., Number Portability Administration Center, 46000 Center Oak Plaza, Sterling, VA 20166. <http://www.npac.com/>).

Number portability also refers to the ability of a user of telecommunications services to retain an existing telecommunications number when physically moving from one location to another within a particular area. "With the introduction of Local Number Portability (LNP) in the North American telephone network, customers will be able to take their current telephone numbers with them when they move within an area defined by the federal or state regulator, such as a city or a county." (See Williams, column 2, lines 42-46.) Thus, a ported number is a number originally served by a first switch that is served by a second switch, either because the physical serving switch dictated by location has changed or because the serving switch has changed by virtue of a change from one service provider to a second service provider. To correctly route the call, once the dialed digits are received at a switching office serving the calling party, a determination is made of whether the call is a number that has been ported. If the number has been ported, the new routing information is obtained from an enhanced directory number table resident at the originating office. In the event that the originating office is unable to offer LRN service, information is obtained at an alternate office. (Williams, Abstract.)

Thus Williams is directed to correctly routing a call from a calling party to a ported called number. There is no need to retrieve a list of contaminated numbers included in a received block of numbers. There is no need to retrieve a location routing number of a switch associated with the uncontaminated numbers in the received block of numbers because no block of numbers has been received – what has been received is a call to a ported number.

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In contrast, a contaminated number is a number within a block of donated numbers that is not available for use by the receiving service provider. (See, c.g., Application as originally filed, page 3, lines 10-11). Contamination is defined as follows at <http://www.numberpooling.org/glossary/default.shtml#c>, a website dedicated to Number Pooling, built by Entricom. "Contamination occurs when at least one telephone number within a thousands-block of telephone numbers is not available for assignment to end users or customers. For purposes of this provision, a telephone number is 'not available for assignment' if it is classified as administrative, aging, assigned, intermediate, or reserved as defined in FCC rules." In other words, a contaminated number has not changed from being served by a first switch to being served by a second switch, it is either "not available for assignment" at all or is already assigned (that is, has stayed with the first service provider). Hence a call to a contaminated number is a call to a number that has *not* ported, it has *not* transferred from a first service provider to a second service provider; it has, in fact, stayed with the original first service provider while the rest of the numbers in the block have been assigned to a second service provider.

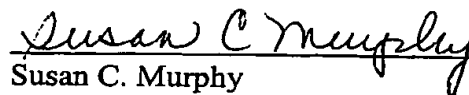
Because Williams fails to disclose every feature of claim 1, claim 1 is considered allowable over Williams. Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable, as are claims 2-8 which depend therefrom. Independent claims 9 and 11 recite analogous features and thus claims 9, 11 and the claims that depend therefrom are patentable for the reasons described above. Withdrawal of the rejections of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is earnestly requested.

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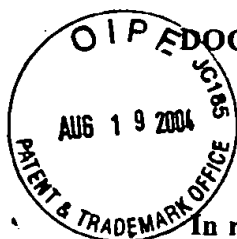
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In view of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Date: August 19, 2004


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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Roderick Holland

Confirmation No.: 1269

Application No.: 09/963,918

Group Art Unit: 2642

Filing Date: September 26, 2001

Examiner: Knowlin, Thjuan P.

For: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR IDENTIFYING CONTAMINATED
TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND CORRECT LRN UNDER NUMBER
POOLING

Commissioner for Patents

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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DATE OF DEPOSIT: August 19, 2004

Applicant-Initiated Interview Summary

RECEIVED

AUG 25 2004

Date of Interview: June 23, 2004

Technology Center 2600

Interview Type: ☐ Personal ☒ Telephonic ☐ Electronic Mail ☐ Video Conference ☐ Other:

Participants:

From PTO: (Include Name and Title)

1. Knowlin, Thjuan P., Examiner
2. Ahmad Matar, Supervisory Patent Examiner
- 3.

For Applicant:

1. Susan C. Murphy, Attorney
2. , choose one: Applicant, Attorney, Agent
3. , choose one: Applicant, Attorney, Agent
4. , choose one: Applicant, Attorney, Agent

☐ An exhibit or demonstration was included and is described below:

The claims discussed included: Claim(s) 1, 9 and 11.

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The ☐ art ☒ prior art discussed included:

Williams et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,097,801

An agreement ☒ was ☐ was not reached.

☐ It was agreed that the attached claims are allowable.

☐ It was agreed that the attached amendment would be entered.

☒ The interview is summarized below.

Claims 1, 9, and 11 were discussed with respect to the reference Williams et al. Agreement was reached that allowability of the instant application hinges on the definition of "ported number". If "ported number" and "contaminated number" have different definitions, then the claims are not anticipated by Williams.

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